

Working with the News Media

presented by

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Working with the News Media

GOAL

Participants will know how to communicate more effectively with the news media.

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Participants in this training session will be able to:

1. Describe how the news media generally conducts business.
2. Describe different methods of communication with the news media.
3. Become knowledgeable of news releases, media alerts, etc.

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4. Communicate effectively in an on-camera interview.
5. Handle media interviews involving public health issues in a professional manner.
6. Be better equipped to avoid common mistakes in news media relations.

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Media in Our Society

1. More mass media channels and news outlets than ever before
2. Public wants more news than ever before
3. Older viewers want more health oriented news

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What is Media?

How is it defined?

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What is media?

Britannica defines media as.....

1. A means of effecting or conveying something
2. A channel or system of communication, information, or entertainment

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What is News?

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2. It must be important or seem to be important.
3. Personalities and Celebrity can make news.
4. Current events are news, history is not news.

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News Consists of 3 C's

1. Conflict
2. Criticism
3. Controversy

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What is a News Story?



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What is a News Story?

1. Who
2. What
3. When
4. Where
5. Why



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Methods of Communication

1. News Release
2. Feature Article
3. Media Advisory
4. Op-Ed Article
5. Editorial Board Visit
6. Public Service Announcement
7. Media Packet



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Methods of Communication

- 8. Fact Sheet
- 9. Letter to the Editor
- 10. Media Tour
- 11. News Conference



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Getting Your Message Out

Know your Objective...

1. What message do you want to communicate.
2. You must determine the content of your message.

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Know your objective

1. What subject do you want to address?
2. It's not enough to have a subject, you must determine the content.

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What should the message be?

1. Simple
2. Single subject
3. Succinct

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Who are you dealing with? (TV/Radio)

1. News Director

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1. News Director
2. Assistant News Director

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Who are you dealing with? (TV/Radio)

1. News Director
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Who are you dealing with? (TV/Radio)

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6. Reporter

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6. Reporter
7. Photographer

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News Coverage Examples

Houston Television and Radio

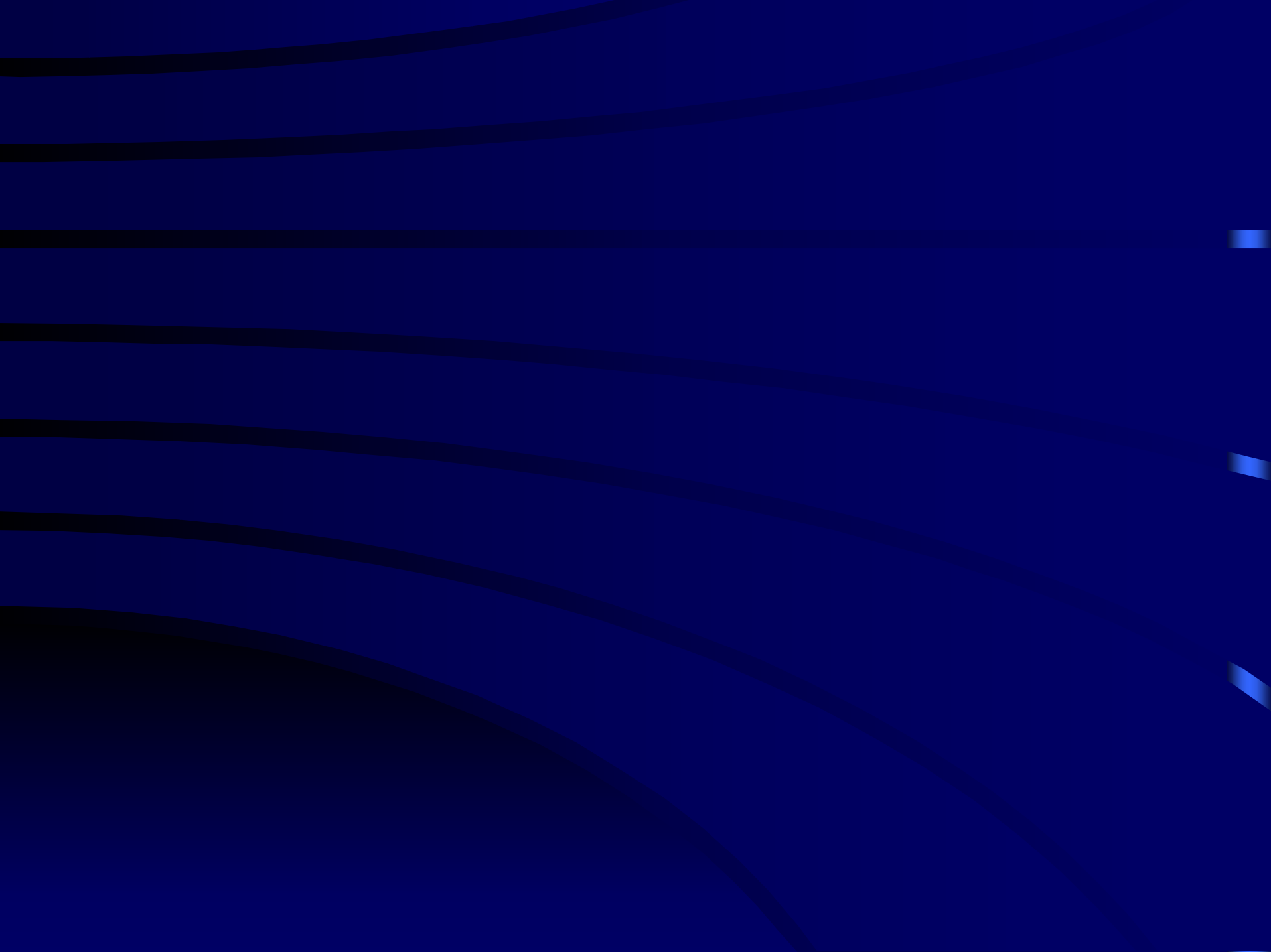
1. Heavy competition for stories
2. Large staff and well equipped to cover national, state, and local news.

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News Coverage

Beaumont/Port Arthur Television and Radio

1. Great opportunity for local coverage
2. Covers more local news in East Texas than national and state news



Newspapers

The newspaper-man is, more than most men, a double personality; and his person feels best satisfied in its double instincts when writing in one sense and thinking in another.

Henry Brooks Adams, 1838-1918

Writing

Do not write so that you can be understood, write so that you can not possibly be misunderstood.

Robert Louis Stevenson, 1850-1894

Fighting the Press

*Beneath the rule of men entirely great,
the pen is mightier than the sword*

Edward Bulwer Lytton, 1803-1873

*Never argue with a man who buys ink
by the barrel.*

Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865

Newspaper Editorial Who's Who

- Publisher, Publisher/Editor
- Editor
- Managing Editor
- Management layer of editors
- Desk Editors
- Reporters/Photographers

Newspaper: Other Departments

- Advertising
- Circulation
- Composition
- Press/Print Shop
- Public/Community Relations
- Newspapers In Education
- Electronic/Web

Making Contact

- Do your homework!
 - Prepare your message...who you are, why you are, what are you doing, where are you doing it and why it's important. (Be able to answer the "so what" question!) Have a contact person.
 - Know the paper...when does it come out, how often, who's the contact person (varies with reason for contact), when they are available.
 - Be ready for 10 minutes, 10 seconds or 10 hours. News rooms are very dynamic.

Making Contact

- Make an appointment and be on time. Also, be flexible. A major breaking story can pull away from your time.
- Read the paper, particularly if you are meeting with a reporter or editorial board. Know what they write and what their usual slant on topics. (Do they run stories about curbing teen tobacco use or that tobacco laws limit personal freedoms.)

Writing Releases

- News writing is not English!!!
 - Inverted Pyramid...most important first, least important last.
 - Lead paragraph should hook the reader.
 - Who, What, Where, When, Why and How high in the story.
 - Short paragraphs, short sentences and quote somebody when possible.
 - Associated Press Stylebook

The “SO WHAT” Question

If you can't tell the reporter, editor, reader why your story is important, you don't have a story. Be able to answer the “so what” question about your topic.

All the news that's fit to print.

Adolph S. Ochs (1858-1950), *New York Times*

All the news that fits.

Barry D. Sharp, (1961 -), *Alvin Sun & Advertiser*

What's the hook for the paper?

- Localize...data, participants, events, effect.
 - A national study with data collected in New York, Sacramento, St. Louis and New Orleans may not draw interest for local readers.
 - A local organization doing something based on the findings of the study is of interest.
 - A local study done by state, national level researchers leading to changes affecting local impact is of interest.

What NOT to do!

- Don't drop in right before deadline.
(Morning for afternoon papers, afternoons for morning papers.)
- If a major story is breaking in town, don't demand undivided attention.
- Don't try to impress reporters by name dropping, unless the story is also impressive and the big names are part of it.

What NOT to do!

- Don't waste their time with a non-story. If you are just getting acquainted or giving an FYI that you are in town say so.
- Passing a non-story off as a story can lead to three things, two of which are bad.
 - They run your story as is, buried on page D16.
 - They get interested in your organization and dig to find the story THEY want to run.
 - Your stuff never sees the light of day...ever.

What NOT to do!

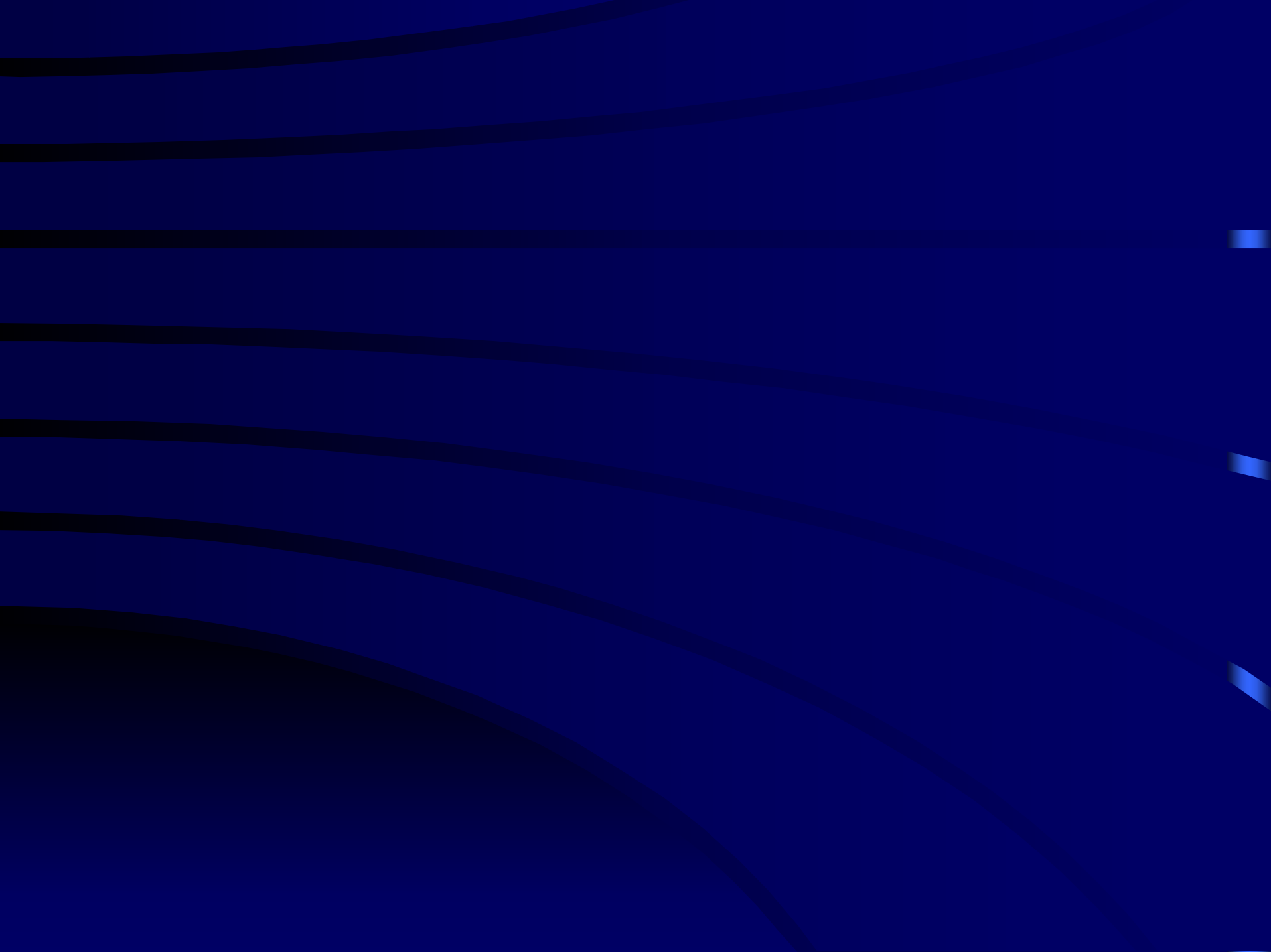
- No Comment. It just gets the reporters curious about what's going on that you aren't telling them.
- Don't ask to proof the story before it's printed.
- Don't go over your contact's head for minor issues. If there is a problem, let your contact try to fix it first. (Error or apathy)

Targeting Messages

- Television : Broad reach, short term around, limited information, unless public service presentation (Sunday morning, 6 a.m.)
- Newspaper: Broad reach, longer to get story out, can give out detailed information
- Radio: Broad/Narrow reach, can be immediate, amount of information provided varies with type of show.

Doing Radio Interviews

- Don't lose sight of your message. The interviewer has their own message...and they control the mike switches. Keep your main message on the tip of your tongue.
- Be relaxed. Know all aspects of your topic and be ready to comment when asked.
- Listen to the show before you go on the air. Get a feel for the interviewer's style, schtick and values. (Howard Stern vs. Rush Limbaugh vs. wannabe).



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The On-camera Interview



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The On-Camera Interview

1. Never go into an interview to just answer a reporter's questions.
2. Have your own agenda.

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About Reporters



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On-camera techniques for News Media Interviews

1. Eye Contact
2. Smile
3. Posture
4. Wardrobe
5. Glasses

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On-camera techniques for News Media Interviews

6. Makeup
7. Interview Location

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For more information, contact...

Texas Department of Health

Office of Communications

512-458-7400

Doug McBride/ Public Info. Officer

Marsha CanWright/ Acting Director